DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 804 JC 810 124

AUTHOR Nicholson, R. Stephen
TITLE International Education.
PUB DATE Jan 81
NOTE 7p.: Paper presented at the Annual "Opportunities for Community Colleges in Global Education" conference (4th, Lake Buena Vista, FL, January 14-16, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role: Biculturalism: *College Presidents: *Community Colleges: Faculty Development: *Foreign Students: *International Education: Periodicals: *Program Development: Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

In a world characterized by increasing global interdependence, the provision of international education programs must be an essential concern of the community college president. Frequently, these programs are considered too sophisticated for community college students or are misconceived as: (1) pleasure junkets: (2) strategies for increasing enrollments through the admission of foreign students: or (3) a means of screening foreign students for upper-division university programs. A well-conceived program, however, introduces the college community to new ideas, revitalizes staff development, and enhances the leadership position of the president by allowing him/her to consider problems beyond daily routines. In developing a program, which should have bicultural as well as bilingual emphasis, the president can start by subscribing to any of several English-language foreign journals, sharing them with colleagues, and identifying faculty with sufficient interest to lead initial program efforts. While foreign students can be a valuable resource, care must be taken to: ease culture shock: admit students on the basis of their psychological and social chances for success, as well as their language ability: and assure that the students are willing and able program participants. Ultimately, however, program success will depend on the president's commitment to a global perspective in college affairs. (JP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED197804

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

R. Stephen Nicholson

Paper presented at the Annual "Opportunities for Community Colleges in Global Education" conference (4th, Lake Buena Vista, FL, January 14-16, 1981)

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Stephen Nicholson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

JC 810 124

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

By R. Stephen Nicholson

International education affords the community college president an unprecedented opportunity for leadership. Properly conceived, these programs enrich faculty, students, and the president himself.

Several misconceptions are frequently encountered regarding international programs. They are not tours or travel groups for pleasure. They are not clever strategies for increasing enrollment by bringing in foreign students. They are not programs to screen foreign students for the universities' upper divisions. Above all, the concept that these courses and ideas are too sophisticated for community college students and faculty is not true. A couple of foreign language series do not qualify as an intercultural-international education program.

One of the structural problems of the community college curriculum is the fact that the local community focus often tends to involve students and faculty who have had limited experience outside the community surrounding the college. This problem of insularity often means that the cross-cultural experience with persons from other areas of the nation and the world is not available to our students. In a world where economics, politics, and technology are universally shared experiences, a lack of global perspective becomes an intellectual and functional deficiency. International education is important and an essential concern for the community college president because so few persons on our campus have either experiences or perspectives to initiate significant programs beyond enrolling foreign students and scheduling tours.

Professional growth and renewal for faculty and administrative staff is another major opportunity. As enrollment growth slows, new staff additions vanish, tenured persons grow older, and new ideas and concepts to create new excitement in improved learning climates are harder to develop. The staff we now have is our future. Their intellectual vitality is a presidential responsibility. Cross-cultural studies which introduce alternative ways of solving problems and perceiving life

and group interests offer one acceptable means for enriching existing courses, curriculum, and instruction.

Personal growth in intellectual perspective is an unquestioned prerequisite for leadership. This exposure to persons, ideas, and methods from around the globe are a valuable means for the president who recognizes that, as a person and a leader in the community of scholars as well as in routine affairs, there is an imperative to devote time to horizons beyond our daily routines. Intercultural learning is a source of strength for a leader surrounded by a daily series of petty crises and routine experiences.

International studies offer the president an unparalleled opportunity for personal growth and a firm foundation for leadership in addressing the college's need for genuine faculty and staff development. A major gain is in the president's ability to assist students and every portion of the college community to move from isolation and local preoccupation to participation in rich and global human experiences.

International education can be a major contributor to the process of college development. Growth, as we once knew it, has leveled and these changes in size are now smaller problems. Our present concern is with development or positive changes in the complexity and sophistication of our courses, programs, and total milieu.

More than foreign language competence must be a goal for international programs. A bilingual person with a mono-cultural perspective may be dangerous. The proper goal for international programs must be a bi-cultural understanding as well as a bilingual ability. Numerous journals and publications in English are available. These give an interpretation of events and incidents in our language from the points of view of Asia, Africa or the major culture areas of the world.

Relatively inexpensive English language publications make these points of view available to every community college. Since international programs can't exist in a vacuum or distill ex nihilo, these journals provide a first step in opening a global perspective. Every area's economics, humanities, political science, business, and technology will find exciting examples of new solutions for old problems and new patterns for exploration which excite both faculty and students.

A president who will take even an hour a week to peruse these publications will make his own speaking to community groups more effective. One major leadership function is to educate, and a president whose speeches only educate the community about the college loses a significant chance to guide the leaders he addresses to world issues which also merit discussion.

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN is available by air mail for a modest annual subscription. Here one finds exceptional coverage of European and Near East events and issues. Candid, urbane, refreshingly clear when compared with our domestic pablum press, it enables one to form personal judgments rather than swallow the predigested analysis and interpretation by our own journalists.

Another valuable air mail resource which covers Asian affairs in a comprehensive way is THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW. Political, social, cultural, and economic matters are clearly reported and carefully analyzed with alternatives for future action explored.

An Asian-Australian magazine HEMISPHERE offers both pictures and articles of superb quality which span the spectrum of Pacific area activities.

Both HEMISPHERE and THE FAR EAST ECONOMIC REVIEW are invaluable for comprehensiveness. While the US press tends to present events as they happen, these publications alert one to developments so that interpretation and perspectives may balance the information we and our colleagues review on a daily basis.

A president who recognizes the advantages of an international program for the college does not need huge dollar commitments to initiate a program. Once the inputs from around the world are available, they may be shared on campus to see who is interested and who sees some way of utilizing these new ideas in the teaching-learning activities.

Leadership for these programs is the key to their success. Naturally, the president must have allies in conceptualizing and implementing innovative programs of every type. Once one or two persons are identified who want to share their exciting news finds with others, a second increment or step in program implementation is completed.

Every community offers the president an array of persons who can present experiences from other cultures. One of the most significant contributions a president may make is to identify these persons and develop a method for bringing them in contact with the college students and those community leaders who need this wider exposure.

As plans are prepared with modest short-range goals, equally modest resource assignments can be made to test the tenacity and gauge the genuine gains from this combination of persons, plans, and ideas.

If foreign students are enrolled on campus, the president needs to monitor their programs from several perspectives. Foreign students often are totally unprepared to cope with our culture and social customs. Islamic students accustomed to virtual isolation between the sexes are easily confused by our open sexuality and the free association between men and women. Asian students often have never experienced being the only person who looks and acts differently in a group. Culture shock, deeply acute and capable of irreparable harm, often results from our best efforts to share what we believe to be our "better" way of behaving.

Unless the campus is prepared to act as family for numerous foreign students and assume responsibility for their total life, serious questions should be asked about admission of any foreign student, let alone significant numbers.

American colleges frequently admit students who have or are having academic difficulty at home and believe they will resolve their social, intellectual, and personal problems if only they can get into a college in the USA. Lacking any measure beyond language tests to assess their social and psychological chances for success, we assume too much in accepting students based on language ability while leaving other life dimensions unexplored.

Marginal students in their own culture will seldom attain more in our culture and frequently lose even more status when they attempt to return home with a flashy degree from a US college. Their own locals take the attitude "we knew them when" and continue to discriminate against them to an even greater degree than prior to their departure for a US college.

Once students are on campus, the president should be aware that they may be exploited innocently or even intentionally by economic, political, or religious groups or individuals. Their limited experience makes them easy prey to either well-meaning innocents or shameless knaves.

It should be recognized that not all foreign students are able or comfortable in presenting themselves and their culture to classes or groups. Some, like our students, barely understand the scope of their culture; some are apologetic; others are aggressive and controversial. Care should be exercised in identifying, as with our own staff, interested and able students who can represent their culture in a positive manner.

If care is taken to assure that the students involved are willing participants, a unique and enriching exchange is possible. Literature classes gain new insight to the selection of authors from other cultures. Our political and social curricula are expanded when students from other cultures interpret them in our classes.

As in other activities, the president's role in international education is catalytic. As fiscal resources diminish ideas, excitement, and advantages, new cultural dimensions will provide infinite growth opportunities if an effective international program exists.

The president's position between the college and the larger world is crucial. The college's vision and understanding will seldom exceed that of its leader. The president is always a person between two cultural groups, an interpreter patiently translating meanings between them so that both are richer for his presence.

We are deeply committed to acting locally but these activities will be more effective if we have colleges capable of thinking globally, whose eyes are upon the whole of mankind rather than on a closed circle of our own kind.

mag
2/24/81

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
96 POWELL LIBRARY BUILDING
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024

MAR 20 1981